United Nations A/56/PV.100

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

100th plenary meeting
Thursday, 6 June 2002, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Sevilla Somoza (Nicaragua), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Joseph Nanven Garba, late former President of the General Assembly

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before turning to the item on the agenda for this morning, the General Assembly will pay tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Joseph Nanven Garba, President of the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session, who passed away last Saturday.

Before serving a distinguished term as President of the General Assembly, Mr. Garba, an accomplished diplomat and a former Minister for Foreign Affairs of his country, Nigeria, had a long and outstanding association with the United Nations. As the chief delegate of Nigeria to the United Nations in the 1980s, Mr. Garba also served as Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid from 1984 to 1989, providing vigorous leadership in the worldwide campaign against apartheid in South Africa.

Mr. Garba will be remembered for the prominent roles he played in the Organization and for the major contributions he made towards the achievement of the objectives set out in the Charter of the United Nations.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I should like to convey to the bereaved family of Mr. Garba and to the Government and the people of Nigeria our deepest condolences.

I now invite members of the Assembly to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of the late former President of the General Assembly, Mr. Joseph Nanven Garba.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Nigeria.

Mr. Ndekhedekhe (Nigeria): I wish to express profound appreciation that it is under your able leadership, Sir, that this meeting of the General Assembly is paying tribute this morning to the memory of Ambassador Garba.

On behalf of the people and the Government of Nigeria, let me express deep appreciation to the various delegations, personalities and others who, in various ways, have shown their sense of loss and expressed their condolences since the death of General Garba on Saturday, 1 June 2002, after a brief illness. Let me also express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his kind words of condolence conveyed to the family of the late Ambassador Garba and to the people of Nigeria. In addition, I should like to acknowledge and to express my appreciation for the kind words expressed in tribute to Ambassador Garba by the

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President of the Security Council yesterday on behalf of that body.

The late Ambassador Garba was a rare personality. He devoted his life to serving his country, Africa and the international community. That was why he spent most of his time resolving conflicts, especially in Africa. And although some of those conflicts still remain flashpoints of concern today, nevertheless Ambassador Garba contributed his own quota to international peace and security. The details of his own life and accounts are ably chronicled in his book, entitled *Diplomatic Soldiering*.

Although Ambassador Garba's discipline was soldiering, his passion was diplomacy. That enabled him to serve creditably as Nigeria's Foreign Minister and, later, as Nigeria's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. During that period, he served the General Assembly as President during its forty-fourth session. He was also Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid, as well as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement's Good Offices Committee on arbitration during the same period. It was in his capacity as Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid that Ambassador Garba exhibited his doggedness and principal philosophy of purposeful support for the fight for freedom, liberty and self-determination, especially in southern Africa.

It is true that today General Garba is no more, but everywhere that national and international assignments took him during his lifetime he was able to serve his fatherland and the world community with passion and commitment. Indeed, it was the same passion to serve mankind that influenced him to accept, even after his retirement, to serve as Director-General of Nigeria's prestigious National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, in Kuru.

While Nigeria and other admirers of the late Ambassador Garba grieve his death, we are thankful that God gave Nigeria the opportunity to serve this body, which enabled Ambassador Garba to serve the United Nations system. We are equally grateful that this morning the General Assembly is paying tribute to one of its own fallen heroes. May God accept the soul of the departed and grant fortitude to Nigeria and the family of the deceased to bear the loss.

Agenda item 125 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/56/780/Add.6)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): In the letter contained in document A/56/780/Add.6, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communications contained in documents A/56/780 and addenda 1 to 5, Dominica has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in document A/56/780/Add.6?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to recall for representatives that at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 19 September 2001, the General Assembly decided to allocate sub-item (b) of agenda item 17 to the Fifth Committee. In order for the Assembly to take the required action expeditiously on this sub-item, as requested in document A/56/102/Add.3, may I take it that the Assembly agrees to consider this sub-item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 17? I see no objection. We shall now proceed accordingly.

Agenda item 17 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(b) Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions

Note by the Secretary-General (A/56/102/Add.3)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): In his note contained in document A/56/102/Add.3, the Secretary-General informs the Assembly that the Government of Belgium has nominated Michel Tilemans to fill the vacancy that has occurred in the Committee on Contributions as a result of the death of

Angel Marrón Gómez of Spain for the remainder of the term of office of Mr. Marrón Gómez, which expires on 31 December 2002.

In his note, the Secretary-General further states that he has been informed by the Chairman of the Group of Western European and other States that the candidature of Mr. Michel Tilemans has been endorsed by that Group. May I therefore take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint Mr. Michel Tilemans as a member of the Committee on Contributions for a term of office beginning on 6 June 2002 and ending on 31 December 2002?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 17.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.